

A New Day: CTE Advisory Committee Holds First Meeting

As Kentucky continues to make historical strides in the field of education, the first meeting of the newly created Career and Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Committee met in Frankfort recently.

The committee is the result of the executive order signed last year by Gov. Steve Beshear that brought together the state and local administrative offices overseeing Kentucky CTE. As part of the order, an advisory committee was to be established to offer guidance to the Office of Career and Technical Education and be composed of individuals representing education and industry.

The first gathering proved to be very beneficial, according to Associate Commissioner Dale Winkler.

“The dialogue was very productive and energetic. I truly feel like this group has the ability to change the face of CTE in Kentucky, not only creating a model for other educational endeavors within the state, but to make Kentucky CTE a model for other states, as well,” he said.

In addition to Winkler, other members of the committee include:

- Beth Brinly, commissioner, Department for Workforce Investment
- Rep. John “Bam” Carney, Kentucky General Assembly
- Sen. Johnny Ray Turner, Kentucky General Assembly
- Ken Carroll, Kentucky Association of Manufacturers
- Kim Dees, Kentucky Hospital Association
- Penny Gold, Kentucky Society of Certified Public Accountants
- David Beck, Kentucky Farm Bureau
- Greg Higdon, Kentucky Association of Manufacturers
- Terry Holliday, commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education
- Ron Livingood, Grant County school district
- RaAnn Miller, Jessamine Career and Technology Center
- Mike Quillen, Kentucky Community and Technical College System
- Mike Stone, Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education
- Tom Thompson, Breckinridge County Area Technology Center

Holliday said there are already several model programs in the state, both at the school level and those instituted by business and industry that relate to CTE. This committee will assist the department in creating a structural model that can be implemented throughout the state.

“We are at a point where CTE can truly help our state educators achieve the college- and readiness goals set forth by Senate Bill 1, and this committee should be instrumental in providing ideas and leadership in making those goals a reality,” he said.

Much of the discussion during the first meeting focused on the needs of the state's business and industry sector.

Gold, CEO of the Kentucky Society of Certified Public Accountants, said the state is set to be a leader in the business world if it has an educated workforce.

"The importance of a unified approach to workforce development cannot be overstated.

Kentucky is positioned to take its place among the most dynamic states for business development; however, our workforce needs to be ready to meet the challenge," she said.

"Corporations looking to expand or relocate often consider Kentucky as a finalist, but too often we lose out to states with a more adequate supply of personnel with the right skills for today's businesses. The best way Kentucky can capitalize on these opportunities is for us to cultivate our talent pool."

Gold added that just having a degree is not what it takes to succeed – students need to learn the skills and professional competencies that are in demand.

"This can be best accomplished by strengthening cooperative efforts with private business and industry. This team approach will help Kentucky educators develop the right curricula and skills training to meet the needs of the marketplace," she said. "The Career and Technical Advisory Committee is definitely on the right track, and I am hopeful its efforts will be a game-changer for the Commonwealth."

The committee discussed many topics related to providing all students with rigorous and relevant programs of study during its inaugural meeting. Some of those included:

- providing career exploration at an early age
- allowing 8th-grade students the opportunity to explore various career clusters
- extending career awareness to parents
- providing professional development for all teachers, including academic core, on the needs of business and industry in Kentucky
- reducing the need of remediation for high school graduates
- expanding work-based learning and pre-apprenticeship programs

Every member of the committee brings the knowledge needed to address these topics and more as it moves to create a more relevant CTE sector, Winkler said.

"At the end of the day, our mission is to educate our young people in such a way that they become successful, well-rounded citizens who contribute to the overall success of communities across Kentucky," he said. "The move to elevate CTE and the group of people we have assembled to help in that process is one of the best things we can do to guarantee the success of these students and our economy, now and for generations to come."